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APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

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TITLE:
BOARD GAME

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is based upon U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/401,211, entitled "Family Heirloom," filed August 5, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The invention relates to a board game. More particularly, the invention relates to a board game designed to help family members learn more about each other. The invention further relates to game creating a dynamic family keepsake of facts and photographs.

2. Description of the Prior Art

When new people enter a family or when family members only infrequently get together, it is difficult for these people to learn about the people making up their family tree. It is difficult to teach young family members about their deceased relatives and it difficult for distant family members to remain connected. It is sometimes even difficult for family members living within the same household to fully appreciate those people making up their family.

As such, a need exists for a mechanism facilitating this learning process. E-mails and family letters are often very positive ways in which to distribute family information. However, these mechanisms can be impersonal and do not encourage the free transfer of information between family members. In addition, many people have difficulty fully expressing themselves in writing.

As people continue to seek enjoyable diversions, board games have continued to grow in popularity. These games offer hours of fun and enjoyment for those participating in the games.

Board games also provide a mechanism for bonding and learning. They bring friends and family members together in a positive environment.

With this in mind, the present invention combines the need for family members to learn about those people making up their family tree with the desire to participate in fun-filled board games, while creating a family keepsake.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the preferred embodiment, described herein, it is an object of the present invention to provide a board game facilitating the transfer of knowledge concerning a family playing the game. The board game includes a game board upon which a plurality of game pieces are moved as the game is played. The game board includes a plurality of game spaces upon which the game pieces are moved so as to determine the action a player is required to take wherein a portion of the game spaces designate a plurality of different categories concerning various aspects of family knowledge. The game further includes a plurality a category question cards, each category question card corresponding to a specific category designated upon the various game spaces included in the game board, and a plurality of family photographs players are asked to identify during the playing of the game. In use, players move game pieces about the game board landing upon various game spaces and answering questions or acting in the manner required by the game space upon which the player lands. The players collect category question cards from the various categories until such a time that one player has collected at least one category question card from each of the plurality of categories.

Other objects, advantages and salient features of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description, which taken in conjunction with the annexed drawings, discloses a preferred, but non-limiting, embodiment of the subject invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a schematic of the present board game.

Figures 2-10 are examples of various cards in accordance with the present invention.

Figures 11A, 11B, 11C and 11D disclose various components of the photo album in

5 accordance with the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The detailed embodiment of the present invention is disclosed herein. It should be understood, however, that the disclosed embodiment is merely exemplary of the invention, which may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, the details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted
5 as limiting, but merely as the basis for the claims and as a basis for teaching one skilled in the art how to make and/or use the invention.

With reference to the attached drawings, a board game is disclosed. The board game is designed to help family members learn more about each other and deceased relatives, while creating a family keepsake. While the game is primarily intended for family members, many family friends
10 would be interested in playing the game and should certainly be included within the spirit of the present invention. Use of the game is not limited to families, but may be used by any group of people who wish to interact, learn about their history, and create a dynamic collection of facts and photographs.

The game is designed for facilitating the learning process between both new and old family
15 members, encouraging these family members to learn more about their respective families. The game invites family members to share information and memories in a collection that will grow with time and create in itself a family keepsake. In fact, and as will be better appreciated based upon the following disclosure, the required submission of family photographs which are maintained in a photo album, creates an ever-growing family photo album which is appreciated and studied each
20 time the game is played.

The board game includes a game board 10 upon which a plurality of game pieces 12 are moved as the game is played. In addition to the game pieces, it is contemplated the game may

further include small tubes of air dry clay of various colors (e.g., red, yellow, green and blue). The clay may be used by family members to create a lasting representation of their own personalized, custom game piece. The game board 10 includes a plurality of game spaces 14 upon which the game pieces 12 are moved so as to determine the action a player is required to take, wherein a
5 portion of the game spaces 14 designate a plurality of different categories concerning various aspects of family knowledge. The board game further includes a plurality of category question cards 16. Each category question card 16 relates to a specific category designated upon the various game spaces 14 included on the game board 10. The board game also includes a plurality of family photographs 18 players are asked to identify during the playing of the game. A game box is further
10 provided for storing the game and the associated components. It is contemplated the game box may resemble a family cedar chest.

The game is played in the following manner. Each player first chooses a game piece 12. Thereafter, each player rolls the dice 20 and the player with the highest score goes first selecting an arbitrary starting space and moving about the game board 10 in either direction. The players take
15 turns rolling the dice 20 and advancing game pieces 12 around the game spaces 14. While moving the game pieces 12 around the game spaces 14, each player attempts to answer questions posed on various category question cards 16. The various category question cards 16 relate to different categories and are readily identified by coordinating the colors of the category question cards 16 with the game spaces 14 along the game board 10.

20 While playing the game, each player holds an answer sheet 22 regarding questions he or she submitted during the game preparation process (which will be discussed below in greater detail). The answer sheet 22 is constructed to slide in a manner revealing only one answer at a time. As the

players attempt to answer various questions, the person who wrote the category question card 16 (or the matriarch/patriarch representing deceased or absent family members) discretely reveals the correct answer to the player attempting to answer the question. If the answer is correct, the player answering the question wins the card 16 and places it in front of himself or herself. If the answer is incorrect, the card 16 is returned to play and is placed side down at the bottom of the category pile such that no other players have an opportunity to see the answer. The questioning and answering is done in private such that other players do not have an opportunity to hear other's answers and to think about questions before they might be forced to answer the same question. Only the person receiving the question sees the answer from the answer sheet 22 of the person who made the category question card 16. In the case of an absent player, the matriarch/patriarch for that player would show the answer sheet to that player. If in choosing the top card 16 of a category card pile, a player chooses a category question card 16 he/she created, the player chooses another category question card 16 until the player chooses a category question card 16 in the category the player did not create.

Players may also lose cards 16 during the playing of the present game. When a player selects a category question card 16 and instead receives a LOSE A CARD card 24 (hidden within the stack of category question cards), the player is required to return a similarly colored category question card 16 to the appropriate stack of category question cards. If a player does not own a similarly colored category question card 16, he or she is required to give up another category question card 16 and put it at the bottom of its category pile. As will be discussed in greater detail below, a player can also lose a card in a BATTLE. A winner is determined when a player collects one of each of the six colored category question cards 16.

The game will now be described in greater detail with reference to the game board 10, accessories and other components required for playing the present game. Prior to beginning the game, the owner of the game asks each of the participating family members to bring a copy of a favorite photograph 18 of one or more family members. The family photograph 18 is slid into the photo album 26 and is utilized in a manner which will be discussed below in greater detail. The information concerning each photograph 18 (for example, people in the photograph, location, event, etc.) is recorded and coordinated with the placement of the photograph in the photo album 26.

As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the initial setup for the present game takes some time but is a one time investment which will provide rewards each time the game is played. In particular, the owner of the game fills out category question cards 16 (see Figures 1 and 2-8) and answer sheets 22 (see Figure 1) upon first opening the game and initiating setup for future play. Anyone may complete a category question card 16 for an absent family member; however, that person must also complete a corresponding answer sheet 22 with 100% certainty that the answers are correct. In addition to filling out the category question cards 16 and answer sheets 22, the game owner may fill out and submit category questions 16 cards for deceased and absent family members. These cards 16 will be extremely valuable in adding meaningful memories for those participating in the game. The cards 16 for the deceased players need not be present in each of the various categories and the game may be played with cards 16 prepared by absent players..

Referring to the game board 10 as shown in Figure 1 and the exemplary category question cards 16 shown in Figures 1 and 2-8, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention the categories are PHOTO GALLERY, PETS OR FAVORITE ANIMALS,

MILESTONES, FAMILY FAVORITES, FAMILY FRIENDS and FAMILY TREES. While specific categories are designated in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the categories may be varied without departing from the spirit of the present invention. For example, and in addition to the categories listed above, additional categories may include

5 FAMILY SECRETS/STORIES and ANNIVERSARIES.

Once the participating players assemble and prepare to play the present game, each player is requested to submit two category question cards 16 for each of the six question categories. While preparing category question cards 16, the players should attempt to prepare questions relating to the photograph they added to the game. In addition, the player creating the card 16 must include

10 his/her name at the bottom of the card 16. New players must also prepare category question cards when they prepare to enter the game for the first time. The game 10 comes with some category question cards, partially filled out to facilitate the start of the game. The player creating the category question card 16 fills in the underlined area and leaves the rectangular section (answer) blank. The answer goes on the answer sheet 22 of the player creating the category question card 16.

15 Each player also completes one accurate answer sheet 22 for his or her questions. In the event a person who previously completed category question cards 16 is "absent," that player's answer sheet 22 would be handled by a "present" player designated the matriarch or patriarch of the game (normally the owner of the game is designated). In the event of four or more "absent" players, a matriarch/patriarch may only be responsible for three missing players' category answer

20 sheets 22. It may be necessary to have more than one matriarch/patriarch. A matriarch/patriarch may not look at any answers other than the answer specific to the question a player is attempting to answer. As will be discussed later in greater detail, during the game the answer sheet 22 is held by

the individual completing the category question cards 16 such that he or she may verify correct answers when family members are asked to answer the questions. In addition, the answer sheets 22 are retained by the game owner so the correct answers may be verified when the family member is not present but the category questions are still being used during the play of the present game.

5 In addition, each time a new player is introduced to the game, he or she is required to provide a photo and prepare two category question cards for each category. As for those players playing the game after their initial introduction, they are encouraged to bring additional photographs and prepare additional category question cards.

10 While category question cards 16 for deceased family members need not be represented in each category, an answer sheet 22 is required for those questions relating to deceased players. The answer sheet 22 is utilized to confirm correct answers when individuals participating in the game are requested to answer questions concerning the deceased family members.

15 As briefly mentioned above, the category question cards 16 and answer sheets 22 prepared in preparation for playing the game become a permanent part of the present game. As such, the game continues to grow the more it is played. The category question cards 16 and answer sheets 22 are used in future games whether or not the family member who created them is present. Individual question cards 16 can be added but not removed in future games. It is recommended that players be encouraged to add an interesting fact or memory to the game via the preparation of additional category question cards 16 after their initial preparation of two category question cards 16 per
20 category.

 With regard to the category question cards 16, they are arbitrarily assigned color codes. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, FAMILY TREE is assigned

green, FAMILY FRIENDS is assigned black, PHOTO GALLERY is assigned blue, MILESTONES is assigned gold, FAMILY FAVORITES is assigned red and PETS OR FAVORITE ANIMALS is assigned yellow. As discussed above, other categories may be used without departing from the spirit of the present invention.

5 The color coding of the various categories helps to maintain the organization of the game by reminding players of the colors (and ultimately the categories) they need to complete the collection of category question cards 16 from all six categories. The color coding of the category answer cards 16 also helps in maintaining and organizing the cards 16 in the various stacks of category question cards 16 relating to the different categories. In fact, the game board 10 is provided with designated
10 areas 28a, 28b, 28c, 28d, 28e, 28f for stacking the category question cards 16 relating to the various categories.

 Examples of the blank category question cards are disclosed with reference to Figures 2 to 8. With regard to a FAMILY TREE category question card 16a and with reference to Figure 2, a player is asked to list “My [relative] name was [name]”. Therefore, a player asked to answer this question is
15 required to provide the name of the desired family member. Further, and with regard to the FAMILY SECRETS category question cards 16b (see Figure 3), a family member is asked to recite a story and request the game player to indicate whether the story is in fact true or false.

 With regard to the PHOTO GALLERY category questions cards 16c as shown in Figure 4, the player is requested to identify a person on “Photo Album Page _”. As discussed above, the
20 photo album is prepared in preparation for the present game and includes pictures of various family members. The family members are identified via the answer sheets prepared in preparation for playing the game and the specific pages of the family album are coordinated with the specific people

shown on the pages. As such, a player answering questions will be able to readily verify whether his or her answer is correct.

With regard to the MILESTONES category question cards 16d and with reference to Figure 5, a card is disclosed. The card asks the player to identify a particular date, for example, birthdays, anniversaries, special events, etc., relating to a particular family member.

Further, and with regard to the FAMILY FAVORITES category question cards 16e, FAMILY FRIENDS category question cards 16f and PETS OR FAVORITE ANIMALS category question cards 16g as shown in Figures 6, 7 and 8, the category question cards include questions regarding favorites (for example, food, hobby, sport, etc.) of family members, friends of family members and animals and pets of family members.

With regard to the game board 10 itself, and with reference to Figure 1, the game board 10 includes a variety of category spaces 14. As discussed above, the category spaces 14 are color coded in conjunction with the category question cards. As such, those playing the game are readily able to associate the various categories with the board spaces and the associated category question cards 16.

The game board further includes BATTLE spaces 14a. If a player lands on a BATTLE space 14a he or she may challenge another player for one of his or her category question cards. This is an opportunity to slow down another player and obtain desired category question cards. When a BATTLE is initiated, each player rolls the dice and the player with the highest total chooses a category question card 16 from the other player.

In addition, the game board includes APOLOGY spaces 14b, CHOICE spaces 14c and LOSE A CARD spaces 14d. In particular, the APOLOGY spaces 14b encourage players to take a moment and mend a fence (for example, "Mary, I am sorry for..."). With regard to the CHOICE

spaces 14c, a player landing on a CHOICE space 14c is allowed to pick a category question card from any category. If the player answers the question correctly, he or she keeps the category question card. Finally, a player landing on a LOSE A CARD space 14d is forced to return a card to the respective category question card pile located in the center of the game board.

5 In an effort to enhance the appearance of the game board, a clear pocket 30 is positioned in the center of the game board. The pocket allows for the positioning of a family photo utilized to decorate the game board and encourage the positive family atmosphere associated with the game.

 In addition to the game board, and in addition to the various category question cards discussed above, the game includes a plurality of LOSE A TURN cards 32 and a plurality of LOSE
10 A CARD cards 24 (see Figures 9 and 10). In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, six of each type of card are provided, one for each category. The cards are color coordinated with the respective categories so those playing the game will not be able to tell the difference between a normal category question card and a LOSE A TURN card 32 or LOSE A
CARD card 24 until it is chosen and turned over. The LOSE A TURN and LOSE A CARD cards
15 32, 24 are mixed with the category question cards such that an individual may encounter one of these cards instead of the category question card when a specific category is landed upon and the player picks a card from the appropriate pile.

 In an effort to facilitate quick setup for the present game, the game owner is provided with a plurality of preprinted category question cards (with blanks to be easily filled in by those playing the
20 game) that may be utilized in the preparation of category question cards 16 (see Figures 2-8). In addition, the game owner will be provided with a family photo album 26 in which the submitted photographs 18 are maintained and categorized for utilization in conjunction with the game. The

game will also include a game board 10, a pair of dice 20 and a plurality of game pieces 12.

As briefly discussed above, the game is played by rolling the dice and moving about the game board in an effort to answer questions and obtain category question cards representing all six categories outlined in accordance with the present game. Once the game has begun, a player will roll, move his or her game piece the appropriate number of spaces and act in the manner specified on the game board. For example, if the user should land on a FAMILY TREE space, the user will be requested to answer a question regarding the name of a family member within the family tree of the game participants. If the user answers the question correctly (reference to previously prepared answer sheets will allow for verification), the player is given the category question card with the question he or she correctly answered. If the question is answered incorrectly, the category question card is returned to the bottom of the pile for the FAMILY TREE category question cards.

Once a player has completed his turn, the next player rolls and moves his or her game piece. The player then answers a question or acts in accordance with the instructions relating to the game space upon which he or she landed. This continues until such a time that one player acquires category question cards for all six categories.

As discussed above, the category question cards are maintained at designated locations within the center of the game board and as further discussed above, one LOSE A TURN card and one LOSE A CARD card are intermingled with each stack of category question cards relating to a specific category.

The photo album is an important defining component of the game 10. In an effort to enhance utilization of the family photo album 26, a system has been prepared for identifying individuals relating to the questions presented in conjunction with the PHOTO GALLERY

category question cards 16c. In particular, and with reference to Figures 11a-d, stickers 34 are provided for marking the photographs such that specific individuals are identified in relation to the questions found on the PHOTO GALLERY category question cards 16c. For example, a plurality of stickers 34 with the words "who," "what," "where," etc., are provided for placement upon
5 individuals in the photo album 26. As such, when a category question cards says, "Who is the person marked in the photo page 3b" the individual need only turn to page 3b of the photo album and identify who is the individual. Further, and in conjunction with the identification of individuals designated in the figures, the answer 36 may be integrally associated with the sticker 34. As such, an individual answering a question may be able to pull a sleeve out of the sticker 34 revealing the
10 correct answer 36 for who is the individual designated in the figure. In addition to the stickers 34 discussed above, a plurality of sticker markers 38 are also provided for the purpose of marking designated individuals found in the photographs of the photo album 26.

While the preferred embodiment has been shown and described, it will be understood that there is no intent to limit the invention by such disclosure, but rather, is intended to cover all
15 modifications and alternate constructions falling within the spirit and scope of the invention.